(b) whether the post offices in Gujarat have not been set up as per the fixed norms;

(c) whether Government are considering to open some post offices in Gujarat during the current year;

(d) if so, the number thereof alongwith the names of places where such post offices are likely to be opened; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The opening of post offices is subject to the proposals, conforming to prescribed norms. Further it depends upon availability of funds and sanctioning of required posts by Ministry of Finance. The targets for opening of new posts offices in Gujarat during the current year are yet to be fixed.

Status of Sankhya Vahini Project

†4620. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of 'Sankhya Vahini' constituted on the basis of agreement between Directorate of Telecommunications and IUNet an American company;

(b) whether global tenders were resorted to for this agreement; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The Joint Venture Agreement proposed to be entered into between Department of Telecom Services and IUNet Inc. is being finalised after taking into consideration all relevant aspects of the project.

(b) and (c) After broad based discussions and consultations, the Information Technology Task Force made the Department of Telecom (now Department of Telecom Services) as the nodal department to work alongwith IUNet of Carnegie Mellon University, USA to establish this project. Thereafter, normal procedures as prescribed for approval of such projects have been followed.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.